

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6927

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S E C R E T PANAM 1557

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNSC, PN

SUBJECT: PANAMA SC MEETING

FROM US DEL PANAMA

1. IN 50 MINUTE MEETING THIS MORNING WITH GEN TORRIJOS, AMB SCALI, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBS BENNETT AND SAYRE, WARNED TORRIJOS HE WOULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY BREAKDOWN OF ORDER, VIOLENCE OR DEMONSTRATIONS DURING SC MEETING. SCALI WAS RESPONDING TO WHAT HE UNDERSTOOD WAS MESSAGE FROM TORRIJOS SPECIFICALLY FOR SCALI THROUGH COLONEL NORIEGA, HIS G-2, WARNING THAT IF SCALI HAD TO VETO SC RES, IT WOULD BE BEST TO DO IT FROM PANAMA'S TOCUMEN AIRPORT BECAUSE VETO WOULD PROVOKE PUBLIC AND STUDENT IRE. SCALI TOLD TORRIJOS IF HE CAST VETO, AS WOULD BE CASE IF PANAMA INSISTED ON ITS REOLUTION, IT WOULD BE IN COUNCIL CHAMBER AND THAT HE AND MEMBERS OF HIS DEL UNAFRAID. SCALI ALSO SAID US WLD DRAW PROPER CONCLUSIONS, THAT VIOLENCE WLD IMPAIR PANAMA - US RELATIONS, PERHAPS SETTING BACK CANAL NEGOTS. SCALI ALSO STRONGLY PROTESTED FONMIN TACK'S CRITICISM OF US AID MOTIVES, PARTICULARLY IMPLICATION US AID GIVEN FOR SELFISH PURPOSES. HE ASKED TORRIJOS WHETHER THIS REFLECTED TORRIJOS' VIEW BECAUSE HE WANTED TO REPORT THIS TO THE PRESIDENT IF PANAMA NO LONGER INTERESTED IN AMERICAN AID. SCALI SAID, COMPLETELY APART FROM
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THREATENED VIOLENCE, HE HAD RECD INSTRUCTIONS TO SUGGEST IMPORTANT NEW PARA IN DRAFT PANAMA RES WHICH HE FELT

WAS POSITIVE AND BROUGHT TWO SIDES CLOSER TOGETHER. BENNETT READ PROPOSED NEW PARA IN SPANISH, DISCUSSED IT BRIEFLY, AND EMPHASIZED HOW IMPORTANT IT WLD BE IN COMPROMISE. SEVERAL TIMES DURING CONVERSATION SCALI SAID THAT HE WAS CONCERNED IN VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS THAT BOYD AND TACK HAD NOT REPORTED CORRECTLY TO TORRIJOS ON US POSITION OVER PAST SIX MONTHS AND HE WAS CONCERNED NOW TORRIJOS NOT GETTING CORRECT REPORTS ON STATUS OF DELIBERATIONS OUTSIDE COUNCIL SESSIONS AND US POSITION.

2. IN REPLY, TORRIJOS TOOK SEVERAL MINUTES TO DISCUSS CLOSE US- PANAMA SECURITY RELATIONS. TORRIJOS SAID MESSAGE WAS RELAYED BY NORIEGA AS A PRECAUTION-- AS PART OF COOPERATION BETWEEN US - PANAMANIAN SECURITY AGENCIES TO KEEP AHEAD OF POSSIBLE VIOLENCE. HE INSISTED MESSAGE NOT SENT AS BLACKMAIL OR THREATENED VIOLENCE. HE PRAISED US SECURITY AUTHORITIES FOR PAST RECORD OF COOPERATION WITH PANAMANIAN GOVT AND SPOKE OF HIS PRIDE IN SMOOTH WORKING RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAS BENEFITED BOTH SIDES. HE PRAISED SCALI' S DIGNITY AND STATURE AND CAPACITY TO RESIST PROVOCATION AS EVIDENCED IN TONE OF HIS SC STATEMENTS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH TACK AND BOYD. HE SAID US SPEECH WAS THOUGHTFUL, WELL- PREPARED AND STRAIGHT-SHOOTING. HE APPEALED TO SCALI TO UNDERSTAND THIS (TORRIJOS') PROBLEM WITH MILITANT STUDENTS WHO DEMANDING HE SHOW REPORTS ON CANAL NEGOTS AND SC

SESSIONS. HE APPEALED-- ALMOST PLEADED- WITH SCALI TO FIND " FEW WORDS" THAT WOULD PRODUCE AGREEMENT ON CANAL RES. HE SAID IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO MAKE FINAL EFFORT, THAT US HAD CAPACITY TO FIND FORMULA AND LANGUAGE. US SHOULD NOT HAVE SUSPICION, HE SAID, OF BAD INTENTIONS ON PANAMA' S PART. " PLEASE FIND THE WORDS", HE SAID, " FIND A FORMULA SO NONE OF US WILL BE IN THE DOG HOUSE". HE ASKED SCALI TO REPORT TO PRES NIXON THAT TORRIJOS IS NOT A MAD MAN, NOT A BLACKMAILER, NOT CONCEPTUALLY ANTI- AMERICAN. HE ASKED FOR A " MARGIN TO GO ON LIVING".

3. RE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, TORRIJOS SAID US SHOULD
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NOT PAY TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO WORDS EXPRESSED IN HEAT OF DEBATE (INTEL REPORTS INDICATE PANDEL IN COMPLETE DISARRAY AFTER SCALI SPEECH AND HASTILY GLUED TOGETHER RESPONSE TO MAINTAIN IMAGE BEFORE PANAMANIAN PUBLIC OPINION). HE WAS WELL AWARE IMPORTANCE US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND HE REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED TO STUDENT, LABOR AND OTHER GROUPS HOW ESSENTIAL IT WAS TO HAVE IT TO PROVIDE FUEL FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE IN PANAMA.

4. IN REPLY, SCALI SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT
FOR HIM TO UNDERSTAND THAT PROPOSED PARA
REPRESENTED THE " LAST EFFORT" BY US TO FIND
ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE. THIS NEW PARA,
SCALI SAID, WAS RESULT OF VERY INTENSIVE
US EFFORTS TO FIND COMPROMISE LANGUAGE.
IT WOULD ALSO GIVE TORRIJOS BASIS FOR
PROCLAIMING A VICTORIOUS FINISH TO THE SC MEETING.
BUT, SCALI SAID, IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR TORRIJOS TO INSTRUCT
HIS NEGOTIATORS TO REFLECT TORRIJOS' GOOD WILL AND
URGE THEM TO FIND A SOLUTION.

5 . TORRIJOS SAID HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY CONTACT TACK
FOR NEW TALKS WITH SCALI.

MORE TO FOLLOW.
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